

**IN THE UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
FOR THE EASTERN DISTRICT OF PENNSYLVANIA**

RUBY WHITEMAN	:	
1228 Veterans Highway, Apt. E1	:	
Levittown, PA 19056	:	CIVIL ACTION
Plaintiff,	:	
v.	:	No.:
RATEX BUSINESS SOLUTIONS, INC.	:	JURY TRIAL DEMANDED
610 West Germantown Pike, Suite 305	:	
Plymouth Meeting, PA 19462	:	
and	:	
ROBERT HALF INTERNATIONAL, INC.	:	
d/b/a Robert Half Technology	:	
656 Swedesford Road, Suite 210	:	
Wayne, PA 19087	:	
Defendants.	:	

CIVIL ACTION COMPLAINT

Plaintiff, Ruby Whiteman (*hereinafter* referred to as “Plaintiff”), by and through her undersigned counsel, hereby avers as follows:

INTRODUCTION

1. Plaintiff has initiated this action to redress violations by Defendant Ratex Business Solutions, Inc. (*hereinafter* referred to as “Defendant Ratex”) and Defendant Robert Half International, Inc. d/b/a Robert Half Technology (*hereinafter* referred to as “Defendant Robert Half”)¹ of the Americans with Disabilities Act (“ADA” – 42 U.S.C. §§ 12101 *et. seq.*) and the Pennsylvania Human Relations Act (“PHRA”).² Plaintiff was unlawfully terminated by Defendants, and she suffered damages more fully described/sought herein.

¹ Defendant Ratex and Robert Half are *hereinafter* collectively referred to as “Defendants,” unless otherwise indicated.

² Plaintiff will move to amend the instant Complaint to include violations of the PHRA after full administrative exhaustion before the Pennsylvania Human Relations Commission. Such claims will identically mirror Plaintiff’s federal claims asserted herein under the ADA.

JURISDICTION AND VENUE

2. This Court may properly maintain jurisdiction over Defendants because Defendants' contacts with this state and this judicial district are sufficient for the exercise of jurisdiction over Defendants to comply with traditional notions of fair play and substantial justice, satisfying the standard set forth by the United States Supreme Court in *International Shoe Co v. State of Washington*, 326 U.S. 310 (1945) and its progeny.

3. The United States District Court for the Eastern District of Pennsylvania has original subject matter jurisdiction over this action pursuant to 28 U.S.C. § 1331 and 1333(a)(4) because the claims arise under the laws of the United States and seeks redress for violations of federal laws. This Court has supplemental jurisdiction over Plaintiff's state law claims because they arise out of the same circumstance and are based upon a common nucleus of operative fact.

4. Venue is properly laid in this District pursuant to 28 U.S.C. §§ 1331(b)(1) and (b)(2), because Defendants conduct business in this judicial district and because a substantial part of the acts and/or omissions giving rise to the claims set forth herein occurred in this judicial district.

5. Plaintiff exhausted her administrative remedies because she timely filed Charges with the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) and now files the instant lawsuit within ninety (90) days of receiving a right-to-sue letter and/or notices of case closure from the EEOC.

PARTIES

6. The foregoing paragraphs are incorporated herein their entirety as if set forth in full.

7. Plaintiff is an adult individual who resides at the above-captioned address.

8. Defendant Ratex is an entity engaged in the business of providing technology and management services to higher education bookstores and has various locations throughout the United States including but not limited to the above captioned location.

9. Defendant Robert Half is a worldwide staffing agency that arranges work assignments for positions within various companies and operates an office at the above captioned location in Wayne, PA.

10. Plaintiff was placed by Defendant Robert Half to work within Defendant Ratex at its Plymouth Meeting, PA location, and although Plaintiff was hired through Defendant Robert Half, Plaintiff was treated in all functional respects like an employee while working within Defendant Ratex. Defendants' management had the ability to manage Plaintiff, discipline Plaintiff, give directive to Plaintiff, and make decisions regarding Plaintiff's employment. Plaintiff was permitted to address his work concerns with Defendant s' management and was obligated to follow the policies of Defendants. Furthermore, Defendant Ratex's management had direct say over whether Plaintiff continued working for such entity.

11. Upon information and belief, Defendants exercised joint control over Plaintiff including but not limited to through joint management and/or supervision, joint policy enforcement, and joint decisions regarding hiring/firing Plaintiff. Therefore, Defendants should be properly considered single and/or joint employers of Plaintiff for purposes of the instant action.

12. At all times relevant herein, Defendants acted through their agents, servants and employees, each of whom acted at all times relevant herein in the course and scope of their employment with and for Defendants.

IV. Factual Background

13. The foregoing paragraphs are incorporated herein their entirety as if set forth in full.

14. Plaintiff was placed by Defendant Robert Half to work at Defendant Ratex's Plymouth Meeting location as a Support Analyst on or about November 30, 2015.

15. Plaintiff's position with Defendant Ratex was a temporary to permanent position.

16. Plaintiff has and continues to suffer from serious health conditions/disabilities, which include but are not limited to, atrial fibrillation (commonly known as A-Fib and/or Irregular heartbeat) and high blood pressure/hypertension.

17. While Plaintiff was at all times relevant herein able to and did perform her job well with Defendants, she was/is (at times) limited in various life activities due to her aforesaid health conditions, including but not limited to regulating her heart beat, regulating her blood pressure, breathing, and working.

18. Plaintiff's aforesaid health conditions have and continue to require ongoing medical oversight, evaluations, medication and treatment.

19. As a result of her aforesaid health conditions and limitations, Plaintiff (at times) required reasonable accommodations, including but not limited to intermittent time off from work to care for or treat for such disabilities.

20. During Plaintiff's employment with Defendants, Plaintiff kept Defendants' managements, including but not limited to Morgan Komatick, Lead Recruiter at Defendant Robert Half (*hereinafter* referred to as "Ms. Komatick") and Tarnesha Jackson, Support Analyst Manager at Defendant Ratex (*hereinafter* referred to as "Ms. Jackson"), apprised of her health conditions and need for reasonable accommodations.

21. For example, on or about December 19, 2015 (a Saturday), Plaintiff was hospitalized for approximately three (3) days due to her aforementioned health condition, which required her to take approximately one (1) day off from work.

22. Plaintiff provided a doctor's note to Defendants' management, including but not limited to Ms. Komatick and Ms. Jackson, pertaining to her aforementioned health conditions and hospitalization related to such health conditions (as discussed *supra*).

23. In or about the last week of December 2015, Plaintiff was hospitalized again due to her aforementioned medical conditions for approximately one (1) day and therefore, had to miss time from work.

24. Plaintiff informed Defendants' management including but not limited to Ms. Komatick and Ms. Jackson that she would not be able to make it into work because she was in the hospital.

25. For example, on December 30, 2015, Plaintiff sent Ms. Komatick an e-mail stating "It's unfortunate that I have to go back to the hospital this morning. I am not going to be able to make it to ratex. I will also text Tarnisha."

26. On or about December 30, 2015 at approximately 2:06 p.m., Ms. Komatick responded to Plaintiff's e-mail and stated:

Hi Ruby

We spoke with Tarnisha and Ratex is going to let you go.
You do not need to go back.

Please email me back to let me know you got this email.

Tarnisha said they have a rollout coming soon and they can't have unexpected absences.

...

Focus on your health right now and let me know when you are better if there is a spot at Ratex we can revisit that possibility

...

27. Plaintiff also received a letter after her termination from Ms. Komatick confirming as follows:

Ruby Whiteman worked for Robert Half Technology at Ratex Business Solutions from the dates of November 30, 2015 to January 1, 2016

She was let go because of absences due to medical emergencies

We are actively searching for a new position for Ruby.

28. Plaintiff was never offered another job through Defendant Robert Half.

29. Plaintiff believes and therefore avers that her termination from Defendants was completely pretextual, as she was terminated (1) shortly after requesting reasonable accommodations; (2) at a time period when she was confiding in Defendants' management about her aforementioned health conditions; (3) shortly after utilizing reasonable accommodations; and (4) for reasons directly related to her aforesaid disabilities and need for reasonable accommodations.

COUNT I

Violations of the Americans With Disabilities Act ("ADA," as amended)

([1] Actual/Perceived/Record of Disability Discrimination; [2] Retaliation; and [3] Failure to Accommodate)
- Against Both Defendants -

30. The foregoing paragraphs are incorporated herein in their entirety as if set forth in full.

31. Plaintiff has and continues to suffer from qualifying disabilities under the ADA (as amended), which (at times) affected her ability to perform some daily life activities, including but limited to regulating her heart beat, controlling her blood pressure, working, and regulating her breathing (among other daily life activities).

32. Plaintiff requested reasonable accommodations in the form of intermittent time off from work for her aforesaid medical conditions.

33. Despite Defendants' management being aware of Plaintiff's aforementioned health conditions and request for a reasonable accommodations, Plaintiff was terminated after only taking very few intermittent days off from work to care for and treat for her aforesaid health conditions.

34. Plaintiff believes and therefore avers that Defendants terminated her because of (1) her perceived/actual disabilities; (2) her record of impairment; (3) her requests for accommodations, which constitutes unlawful discrimination and retaliation; and/or (4) Defendants' failure to accommodate her disabilities (by refusing to provide her with intermittent time off).

35. These actions as aforesaid constitute violations of the ADA.

WHEREFORE, Plaintiff prays that this Court enter an Order providing that:

A. Defendants are to be prohibited from continuing to maintain their illegal policy, practice or custom of discriminating/retaliating against employees and are to be ordered to promulgate an effective policy against such unlawful acts and to adhere thereto;

B. Defendants are to compensate Plaintiff, reimburse Plaintiff and make Plaintiff whole for any and all pay and benefits Plaintiff would have received had it not been for Defendants' illegal actions, including but not limited to past lost earnings, future lost earnings, salary, pay increases, bonuses, medical and other benefits, training, promotions, pension, and seniority. Plaintiff should be accorded those benefits illegally withheld from the date she first suffered retaliation/discrimination at the hands of Defendants until the date of verdict;

C. Plaintiff is to be awarded liquidated/punitive damages, as permitted by applicable law, in an amount determined by the Court or trier of fact to be appropriate to punish Defendants

for their willful, deliberate, malicious and outrageous conduct and to deter Defendants or other employers from engaging in such misconduct in the future;

D. Plaintiff is to be accorded any and all other equitable and legal relief as the Court deems just, proper and appropriate, including but not limited to, emotional distress and/or pain and suffering damages (where legally permitted);

E. Plaintiff is to be awarded the costs and expenses of this action and reasonable legal fees as provided by applicable federal and state law;

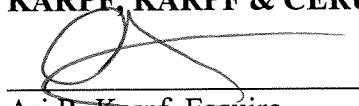
F. Any verdict in favor of Plaintiff is to be molded by the Court to maximize the financial recovery available to the Plaintiff in light of the caps on certain damages set forth in applicable federal law; and

G. Plaintiff's claims are to receive trial by jury to the extent allowed by applicable law. Plaintiff has also endorsed this demand on the caption of this Complaint in accordance with Federal Rule of Civil Procedure 38(b).

Respectfully submitted,

KARPE, KARPF & CERUTTI, P.C.

By:


Ari R. Karpf, Esquire
3331 Street Road
Two Greenwood Square, Suite 128
Bensalem, PA 19020
(215) 639-0801

Dated: September 21, 2016

**IN THE UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
FOR THE EASTERN DISTRICT OF PENNSYLVANIA**

CASE MANAGEMENT TRACK DESIGNATION FORM

Ruby Whiteman	:	CIVIL ACTION
v.	:	NO.
Ratex Business Solutions, Inc., et al.	:	

In accordance with the Civil Justice Expense and Delay Reduction Plan of this court, counsel for plaintiff shall complete a Case Management Track Designation Form in all civil cases at the time of filing the complaint and serve a copy on all defendants. (See § 1:03 of the plan set forth on the reverse side of this form.) In the event that a defendant does not agree with the plaintiff regarding said designation, that defendant shall, with its first appearance, submit to the clerk of court and serve on the plaintiff and all other parties, a Case Management Track Designation Form specifying the track to which that defendant believes the case should be assigned.

SELECT ONE OF THE FOLLOWING CASE MANAGEMENT TRACKS:

- (a) Habeas Corpus – Cases brought under 28 U.S.C. § 2241 through § 2255.
- (b) Social Security – Cases requesting review of a decision of the Secretary of Health and Human Services denying plaintiff Social Security Benefits.
- (c) Arbitration – Cases required to be designated for arbitration under Local Civil Rule 53.2.
- (d) Asbestos – Cases involving claims for personal injury or property damage from exposure to asbestos.
- (e) Special Management – Cases that do not fall into tracks (a) through (d) that are commonly referred to as complex and that need special or intense management by the court. (See reverse side of this form for a detailed explanation of special management cases.)
- (f) Standard Management – Cases that do not fall into any one of the other tracks.

<p>9/22/2016</p> <p><u>Date</u></p> <p>(215) 639-0801</p> <p><u>Telephone</u></p>	 <p>Attorney-at-law</p> <p>(215) 639-4970</p> <p><u>FAX Number</u></p>	<p>Plaintiff</p> <p>Attorney for</p> <p>akarpf@karpf-law.com</p> <p><u>E-Mail Address</u></p>
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UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT

FOR THE EASTERN DISTRICT OF PENNSYLVANIA — DESIGNATION FORM to be used by counsel to indicate the category of the case for the purpose of assignment to appropriate calendar.

Address of Plaintiff: 1228 Veterans Highway, Apt. E1, Levittown, PA 19056

Address of Defendant: 610 West Germantown Pike, SUite 305, Plymouth Meeting, PA 19462/656 Swedesford Road, Suite 210, Wayne, PA 19087

Place of Accident, Incident or Transaction: Defendants place of business

(Use Reverse Side For Additional Space)

Does this civil action involve a nongovernmental corporate party with any parent corporation and any publicly held corporation owning 10% or more of its stock?
(Attach two copies of the Disclosure Statement Form in accordance with Fed.R.Civ.P. 7.1(e))

Yes No

Does this case involve multidistrict litigation possibilities?

Yes No

RELATED CASE, IF ANY:

Case Number: _____ Judge: _____ Date Terminated: _____

Civil cases are deemed related when yes is answered to any of the following questions:

1. Is this case related to property included in an earlier numbered suit pending or within one year previously terminated action in this court?
Yes No
2. Does this case involve the same issue of fact or grow out of the same transaction as a prior suit pending or within one year previously terminated action in this court?
Yes No
3. Does this case involve the validity or infringement of a patent already in suit or any earlier numbered case pending or within one year previously terminated action in this court?
Yes No
4. Is this case a second or successive habeas corpus, social security appeal, or pro se civil rights case filed by the same individual?
Yes No

CIVIL: (Place in ONE CATEGORY ONLY)

A. Federal Question Cases:

1. Indemnity Contract, Marine Contract, and All Other Contracts
2. FELA
3. Jones Act-Personal Injury
4. Antitrust
5. Patent
6. Labor-Management Relations
7. Civil Rights
8. Habeas Corpus
9. Securities Act(s) Cases
10. Social Security Review Cases
11. All other Federal Question Cases
(Please specify) _____

B. Diversity Jurisdiction Cases:

1. Insurance Contract and Other Contracts
2. Airplane Personal Injury
3. Assault, Defamation
4. Marine Personal Injury
5. Motor Vehicle Personal Injury
6. Other Personal Injury (Please specify)
(Please specify) _____
7. Products Liability
8. Products Liability — Asbestos
9. All other Diversity Cases

I, Ari R. Karpf, _____, counsel of record do hereby certify:

Pursuant to Local Civil Rule 53.2, Section 3(c)(2), that to the best of my knowledge and belief, the damages recoverable in this civil action case exceed the sum of \$150,000.00 exclusive of interest and costs;

Relief other than monetary damages is sought.

ARBITRATION CERTIFICATION

(Check Appropriate Category)

DATE: 9/22/2016

Attorney-at-Law

ARK2484

Attorney I.D.# 91538

NOTE: A trial de novo will be a trial by jury only if there has been compliance with P.R.C.P. 38.

I certify that, to my knowledge, the within case is not related to any case now pending or within one year previously terminated action in this court except as noted above.

DATE: 9/22/2016

Attorney-at-Law

ARK2484

Attorney I.D.# 91538

CIV. 609 (5/2012)

CIVIL COVER SHEET

The JS 44 civil cover sheet and the information contained herein neither replace nor supplement the filing and service of pleadings or other papers as required by law, except as provided by local rules of court. This form, approved by the Judicial Conference of the United States in September 1974, is required for the use of the Clerk of Court for the purpose of initiating the civil docket sheet. (SEE INSTRUCTIONS ON NEXT PAGE OF THIS FORM.)

I. (a) PLAINTIFFS

WHITEMAN, RUBY

(b) County of Residence of First Listed Plaintiff Bucks
(EXCEPT IN U.S. PLAINTIFF CASES)

(c) Attorneys (Firm Name, Address, and Telephone Number)

Karpf, Karpf & Cerutti, P.C., 3331 Street Road, Two Greenwood Square, Suite 128, Bensalem, PA 19020, (215) 639-0801, akarpf@karpf-law.com

DEFENDANTS

RATEX BUSINESS SOLUTIONS, INC., ET AL.

County of Residence of First Listed Defendant Montgomery

(IN U.S. PLAINTIFF CASES ONLY)

NOTE: IN LAND CONDEMNATION CASES, USE THE LOCATION OF THE TRACT OF LAND INVOLVED.

Attorneys (If Known)

II. BASIS OF JURISDICTION (Place an "X" in One Box Only)

<input type="checkbox"/> 1 U.S. Government Plaintiff	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 3 Federal Question (U.S. Government Not a Party)
<input type="checkbox"/> 2 U.S. Government Defendant	<input type="checkbox"/> 4 Diversity (Indicate Citizenship of Parties in Item III)

III. CITIZENSHIP OF PRINCIPAL PARTIES (Place an "X" in One Box for Plaintiff and One Box for Defendant)

Citizen of This State	PTF	DEF	PTF	DEF
<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	Incorporated or Principal Place of Business In This State	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 4
<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	Incorporated and Principal Place of Business In Another State	<input type="checkbox"/> 5	<input type="checkbox"/> 5
<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	Foreign Nation	<input type="checkbox"/> 6	<input type="checkbox"/> 6

IV. NATURE OF SUIT (Place an "X" in One Box Only)

CONTRACT	TORTS	FORFEITURE/PENALTY	BANKRUPTCY	OTHER STATUTES
<input type="checkbox"/> 110 Insurance <input type="checkbox"/> 120 Marine <input type="checkbox"/> 130 Miller Act <input type="checkbox"/> 140 Negotiable Instrument <input type="checkbox"/> 150 Recovery of Overpayment & Enforcement of Judgment <input type="checkbox"/> 151 Medicare Act <input type="checkbox"/> 152 Recovery of Defaulted Student Loans (Excludes Veterans) <input type="checkbox"/> 153 Recovery of Overpayment of Veteran's Benefits <input type="checkbox"/> 160 Stockholders' Suits <input type="checkbox"/> 190 Other Contract <input type="checkbox"/> 195 Contract Product Liability <input type="checkbox"/> 196 Franchise	PERSONAL INJURY <input type="checkbox"/> 310 Airplane <input type="checkbox"/> 315 Airplane Product Liability <input type="checkbox"/> 320 Assault, Libel & Slander <input type="checkbox"/> 330 Federal Employers' Liability <input type="checkbox"/> 340 Marine <input type="checkbox"/> 345 Marine Product Liability <input type="checkbox"/> 350 Motor Vehicle <input type="checkbox"/> 355 Motor Vehicle Product Liability <input type="checkbox"/> 360 Other Personal Injury <input type="checkbox"/> 362 Personal Injury - Medical Malpractice	PERSONAL INJURY <input type="checkbox"/> 365 Personal Injury - Product Liability <input type="checkbox"/> 367 Health Care/ Pharmaceutical Personal Injury Product Liability <input type="checkbox"/> 368 Asbestos Personal Injury Product Liability PERSONAL PROPERTY <input type="checkbox"/> 370 Other Fraud <input type="checkbox"/> 371 Truth in Lending <input type="checkbox"/> 380 Other Personal Property Damage <input type="checkbox"/> 385 Property Damage Product Liability	<input type="checkbox"/> 625 Drug Related Seizure of Property 21 USC 881 <input type="checkbox"/> 690 Other	<input type="checkbox"/> 422 Appeal 28 USC 158 <input type="checkbox"/> 423 Withdrawal 28 USC 157 PROPERTY RIGHTS <input type="checkbox"/> 820 Copyrights <input type="checkbox"/> 830 Patent <input type="checkbox"/> 840 Trademark
REAL PROPERTY	CIVIL RIGHTS <input type="checkbox"/> 210 Land Condemnation <input type="checkbox"/> 220 Foreclosure <input type="checkbox"/> 230 Rent Lease & Ejectment <input type="checkbox"/> 240 Torts to Land <input type="checkbox"/> 245 Tort Product Liability <input type="checkbox"/> 290 All Other Real Property	PRISONER PETITIONS <input type="checkbox"/> 440 Other Civil Rights <input type="checkbox"/> 441 Voting <input type="checkbox"/> 442 Employment <input type="checkbox"/> 443 Housing/ Accommodations <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 445 Amer. w/Disabilities - Employment <input type="checkbox"/> 446 Amer. w/Disabilities - Other <input type="checkbox"/> 448 Education	LABOR <input type="checkbox"/> 710 Fair Labor Standards Act <input type="checkbox"/> 720 Labor/Management Relations <input type="checkbox"/> 740 Railway Labor Act <input type="checkbox"/> 751 Family and Medical Leave Act <input type="checkbox"/> 790 Other Labor Litigation <input type="checkbox"/> 791 Employee Retirement Income Security Act	SOCIAL SECURITY <input type="checkbox"/> 861 HIA (1395f) <input type="checkbox"/> 862 Black Lung (923) <input type="checkbox"/> 863 DIWC/DIWW (405(g)) <input type="checkbox"/> 864 SSID Title XVI <input type="checkbox"/> 865 RSI (405(g))
				FEDERAL TAX SUITS <input type="checkbox"/> 870 Taxes (U.S. Plaintiff or Defendant) <input type="checkbox"/> 871 IRS—Third Party 26 USC 7609
				IMMIGRATION <input type="checkbox"/> 462 Naturalization Application <input type="checkbox"/> 465 Other Immigration Actions

V. ORIGIN (Place an "X" in One Box Only)

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1 Original Proceeding	<input type="checkbox"/> 2 Removed from State Court	<input type="checkbox"/> 3 Remanded from Appellate Court	<input type="checkbox"/> 4 Reinstated or Reopened	<input type="checkbox"/> 5 Transferred from Another District (specify) _____	<input type="checkbox"/> 6 Multidistrict Litigation
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Cite the U.S. Civil Statute under which you are filing (Do not cite jurisdictional statutes unless diversity):

Americans w/Disabilities Act "ADA" (42 USC 12101)

VI. CAUSE OF ACTION

Brief description of cause:

Violations of the ADA and the PHRA.

CHECK YES only if demanded in complaint:

JURY DEMAND: Yes No

VII. REQUESTED IN COMPLAINT:

 CHECK IF THIS IS A CLASS ACTION UNDER RULE 23, F.R.Cv.P.

DEMAND \$ _____

CHECK YES only if demanded in complaint:

JURY DEMAND: Yes No

VIII. RELATED CASE(S) IF ANY

(See instructions):

JUDGE _____

DOCKET NUMBER _____

DATE

9/22/2016

SIGNATURE OF ATTORNEY OF RECORD

FOR OFFICE USE ONLY

RECEIPT #

AMOUNT

APPLYING IFP

JUDGE

MAG. JUDGE

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